

The Independent

FEBRUARY 14, 1901

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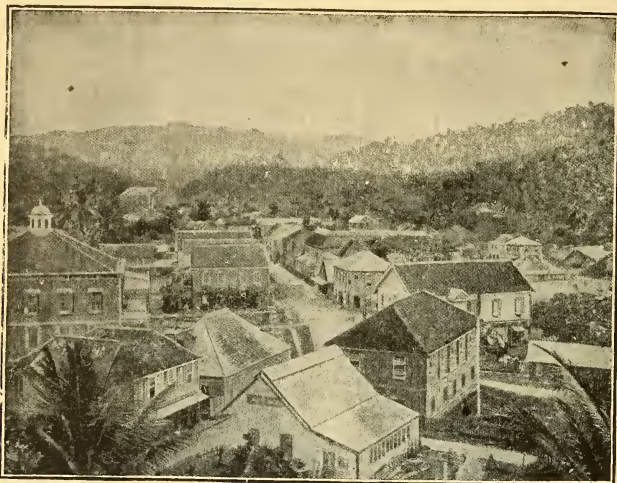
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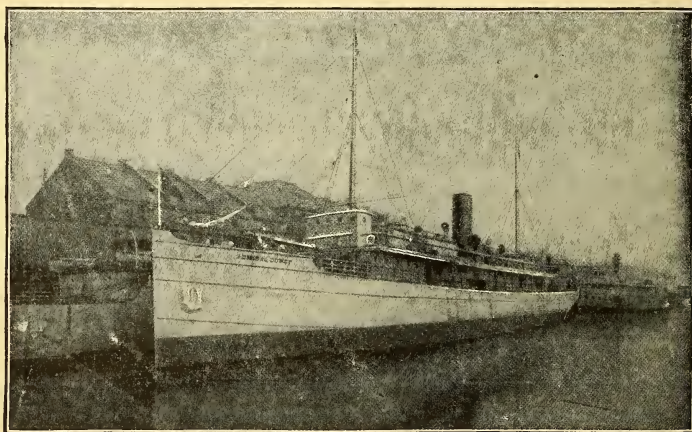
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he wants to make himself beloved he must protect art in all its branches, as it is protected by the Duke of Saxe Weimar, and formerly by the late Duchess, who have both entered warmly into intellectual activities. Music is not a favorite pleasure of the Queen, but she seems to take some pleasure in painting. So, now and then, she visits painters' festivals. Lately, at a feast of "Pulchri Studio," at The Hague, a well-known young artist was introduced to Her Majesty, who showed that she did not know him. The young man blushed and looked somewhat offended. On perceiving this, she immediately added: "Oh! but that is because you never yet asked to be allowed to paint my portrait! I am so fond of chalk, will you come and do me some time?" Yes, she is quick and clever. That has often been evident at official receptions.

A pleasant evidence of our Queen's being very much bent on etiquette I can relate. Last year she attended a concert in Amsterdam. When she rose from

her chair to depart a member of the Reception Committee rushed up to her with her cloak. But in vain he tried to assist her! Twice she let the mantle slip from her shoulders to show that his service ought to be done by a lady of the court in attendance. Tho always most kind and friendly (especially toward her domestics), Queen Wilhelmina thinks very highly of her royal dignity, and she cannot allow any publication as to her private life. To show how closely the convention is maintained, even in so small a court as that of Holland, I cite the following from a letter which I got from Miss Paron-Winter, who has lived in the most intimate relationship with the Queen for more than eleven years: ". . . It is an understood thing that all court officials are absolutely loyal and true to the sovereigns they serve, and a strict code of honor exists among them never to repeat to outsiders the details of intimate home life within the palace, even if those details be attractive to the general public!"

AMSTERDAM, HOLLAND.

How Abraham Lincoln Righted a Wrong.

By Henry S. Burrage, D.D.

IN the memorable Lincoln number of THE INDEPENDENT a few years ago, Hon. Alexander H. Rice, of Massachusetts, referred to an interview he had with President Lincoln during the war in my behalf—an interview which he has often described as the most characteristic he ever had with the martyr-President. Using his account of this interview for an illustrative purpose, however, Mr. Rice was compelled necessarily to omit many of the facts which he so ably and so successfully laid before the President; and as the case was so peculiar and involved so many persons prominent in both armies during the war an added statement may not be found uninteresting.

November 1st, 1864, as brigade officer of the day, I was in command of the picket of the first brigade, second division, Ninth Corps, on the left of our line at Petersburg. Having been wounded at

the battle of Cold Harbor, June 3d, I had only recently rejoined my regiment, the Thirty-sixth Massachusetts, and General Curtin (a nephew of the War Governor of Pennsylvania), who commanded the brigade, had also been absent, wounded, about the same length of time. When I went to General Curtin for my instructions that morning, among other things he said, "You will not allow the men on the picket line to exchange papers, as we have had some desertions in that way; but if an opportunity occurs for an exchange you can avail yourself of it and bring the papers to me."

In making my rounds with the division officer of the day—the Lieutenant-Colonel of the Thirty-first Maine—a post was at length reached on a road which, crossing our picket line in a thick growth of timber, passed also through the enemy's line, not, however, in sight on account of

an angle in the road. Here a lieutenant, to whom, as to other officers on the line, I had sent General Curtin's order forbidding an exchange of papers, called my attention to a Confederate officer, as his dress indicated, who was standing at the angle of the road with a paper in his hand waiting for some one to come out from our line and exchange. Such an exchange of newspapers had been almost the daily custom at this point for several weeks, as there was no firing from either side. Leaving the division officer of the day at the picket post, I walked down the road and met the Confederate. He had three Richmond papers, and he said he would give me these if, in addition to the paper I had, I would bring out in the afternoon a Washington Sunday morning *Chronicle*. I told him I would, gave him my paper, took his three papers, and, as I turned to go back to my line, I asked him his rank and regiment. He said he was the major of the Second Mississippi.

Having completed my rounds I went to General Curtin's headquarters, and left the three Richmond papers. In the afternoon when I revisited my line, I took with me a Sunday morning *Chronicle*. On reaching the post from which I had made the exchange in the morning, however, I found that the major of the Second Mississippi had not been seen, and, thinking that possibly he expected I would call him out, I at length unfolded my paper, and, walking down the road, passed the angle and found myself in front of the rebel picket posts, not more than seventy-five or one hundred yards away. A Confederate soldier left his place as I supposed in order to call an officer. Presently the men in the pits rose, leveled their muskets, and an officer called out: "Come in or we'll fire!"

To attempt to escape was useless. I supposed that after a few words of explanation, however, I would be allowed to return to my line; and I said to the officer at the post that I had not come out on my own account, but in accordance with a promise I had made to the officer who exchanged papers with me at that point in the forenoon. He declined to accept my explanation, however, and sent me to his brigade commander, Colonel Cowan, then commanding Lane's brigade.

After listening to my story, Colonel Cowan said that the officer at the picket post ought not to have captured me, but that I had seen so much of his line he did not feel warranted in allowing me to return; and so he sent me to his division commander, General Heth, whose headquarters were on the Roydton Plank Road, near Fort Gregg.

When I reached his headquarters General Heth was inspecting his picket line, and it was an hour or more before he returned. He was not in a very pleasant mood, and had evidently heard of my capture, for he saluted me in a somewhat pompous tone with the words: "Captain, there is no intercourse between your people and my people. You will be held as a prisoner of war."

A guard was then ordered to take me to General A. P. Hill, who was in command of the Confederate forces south of the Appomattox. General Hill's headquarters were near the house of a Mr. Venable, just outside of Petersburg, on what was known as the River Road. Colonel Palmer, General Hill's adjutant-general, received my statement concerning my capture, and after reporting to the general informed me that the case would be investigated, and that if the facts were as I had reported them, I would be returned in a few days to my own lines. He then dismissed the guard, on my giving my word that I would not attempt to escape, and assigned me quarters with Dr. Hamilton, a surgeon on General Hill's staff.

The doctor, who was a former resident of Baltimore, if I remember rightly, I found to be a courteous gentleman, and he gave me a soldier's welcome. I remained at General Hill's headquarters two days, was allowed the largest liberty and treated most kindly. The members of the staff and other officers visiting headquarters talked with me freely, and all assured me that it was the general's purpose to send me back to my own lines after a few days. Letters were brought to me addressed to Confederate prisoners at the North, and I was asked to forward them through the mail on my return. Mr. Venable daily sent me food from his own table, and I was greatly enjoying my stay in the Confederacy, when on the afternoon of the second day, while I was talking with a group of staff officers with

whom I was going over some of the battles of the war, an officer entered Dr. Hamilton's tent and said I would be held as a prisoner of war, and that a guard was already in waiting to take me away. The officers present, including Dr. Hamilton, expressed their surprise at this announcement, and said they could give no explanation of the change that had occurred in General Hill's mind. I thanked them for their kind attentions, gave back the letters which had been intrusted to me, and, not a little perplexed at the sudden change in my prospects, accompanied the guard as in a cold, drizzling rain he conducted me to the jail in Petersburg, where I spent the night.

The next day I was sent to Richmond. The distance is about twenty miles, but a large part of the day was consumed in making the journey, so slowly did the train make its way, and so frequent and long were the stops. It was at the close of the day, November 4th, that I entered the Libby. Dick Turner, and an assistant of kindred spirit, made the customary search, showing themselves adepts in rifling pockets, shaking boots, etc. My money they took, but I was allowed to retain my watch.

A few days after my arrival at the Libby I succeeded in obtaining a sheet of letter paper, and prepared a statement of the facts concerning my capture. This, addressed to General Lee, I handed to Dick Turner at roll-call. I had very grave doubts whether the document would reach its destination, but I made the venture, not expecting it would secure my release, but desiring, if possible, to learn what was the reason why General Hill had given orders for my retention as a prisoner of war.

Several weeks passed and I had almost come to the conclusion that my communication had in some way miscarried, when on the 28th of November my statement was returned, well covered with indorsements. From these I learned that General Lee received the communication, and sent it to General A. P. Hill, with a request for his statement of the case. General Hill, in a lengthy indorsement, replied that my statement to General Lee was the same which I made when I was brought to his headquarters on the day of my capture. But, on investigating the case, he said, he found that the major

of the Second Mississippi, with whom I claimed to have exchanged papers that morning, had been absent, wounded for months. Furthermore, there was firing on that part of the line that afternoon, he said, and General Heth was of the opinion that I was out under the guise of exchanging papers, looking over the ground preparatory to an attack on the Confederate line, in retaliation for the capture of the picket line of the Second Corps by Mahone a night or two before. From these facts, he continued, I considered him a prisoner of war fairly captured, and forwarded him as such. General Lee, in his indorsement, added that from these facts as set forth by General Hill he failed to see why I should not be regarded as a prisoner of war fairly captured.

I go back now to the day of my capture. The lieutenant on the post in front of which the capture was made, finding that I did not return, reported the fact to General Curtin, who at once sent a staff officer to the picket line to look over the ground and obtain additional facts, if possible, concerning the capture. In due time an announcement of the capture reached General Meade, at the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac. Without seeking any further information in reference to the officer, General Meade issued an order November 7th dismissing me from the service for having in violation of repeated orders held communication with the enemy by an interchange of newspapers.

The order in due time reached brigade headquarters, but without promulgating it General Curtin in a letter called General Meade's attention to the fact that when the orders against the exchange of newspapers to which he referred were issued I was absent from the army on account of wounds received in action, as was he also himself; that on our return to duty the exchange of newspapers was a matter of almost daily occurrence, General Meade's staff officers often participating in such exchanges; that accordingly he had every reason to believe I had no knowledge of the existence of any such orders, indeed that he himself had no knowledge of such orders until he received the order dismissing me from the service; and he therefore hoped that for these reasons, and also on account of my previous good record as an officer,

which he placed before the commanding general, General Meade would recall his order and not insist upon its promulgation. General Meade, however, was inexorable, and the order having reached the War Department, received the formal approval of the President, an announcement of which was made November 12th, in special orders from the Adjutant-General's office in Washington.

The promulgation of General Meade's order awakened not a little indignation among my brother officers of the Thirty-sixth Massachusetts, who were as jealous of a comrade's good name as they were of their own; and they at once set on foot measures for the vindication of my character and conduct. Tho' General Meade had refused to allow any weight to the facts presented by General Curtin, it was believed that the President would show a different spirit. The great right of petition was theirs, and they hastened to avail themselves of it. In a communication to Mr. Lincoln, after referring to General Meade's order dismissing me from the service, they called attention to the fact that General Meade's orders against the exchange of papers were issued in my absence from the regiment on account of wounds received at the battle of Cold Harbor, and that attention had not been called to such orders since my return. On this account and because of my record as an officer, they respectfully requested the President to revoke General Meade's order dismissing me from the service, or so to amend it that I might have an opportunity to make personal defense.

This petition, signed by all the officers in the regiment, was approved at brigade, division and corps headquarters, and was sent to General Meade. As nothing was heard from it, it was for some time supposed that General Meade stopped the petition at his headquarters, and February 4th, 1865, a second petition, approved at brigade and division headquarters, was indorsed by Major-General John G. Parke at corps headquarters with these words: "A paper of similar import was forwarded through the regular channel December 1st, 1864, but hearing nothing from it in reply I now take the liberty to divert this from the proper channel."

General Meade, however, had not

stopped the petition, but in forwarding it he expressed his disapproval in a lengthy letter, in which he begged the President to allow the order to stand. He admitted that the exchange of newspapers at Petersburg had become a matter of frequent occurrence, and that his own staff officers were as guilty as any; but the good of the service, he claimed, rendered the order necessary, and he closed the communication with the suggestive words that Mr. Lincoln would bear him witness that he had not been accustomed to ask for favors.

Meanwhile my friends at home, after learning from officers in the regiment the facts that have already been recounted, had not been inactive. The aid of our representative to Congress, Hon. Alexander H. Rice, and of both the Senators from Massachusetts, Hon. Charles Sumner and Hon. Henry Wilson, was early invoked. Colonel William F. Draper, of my regiment (afterward General Draper), also wrote to Governor Andrew an urgent letter. To this appeal and others like it, the large hearted war Governor of Massachusetts responded, and three days later, November 22d, 1864, he addressed a ringing letter to President Lincoln, asking for a reconsideration of his approval of General Meade's order. Referring to my unhappy position, he said: "He is a prisoner in the hands of the rebels, and has had no opportunity whatsoever to be heard in his own defense. Whatever may be the offense with which he is charged, or whatever may be his degree of culpability, I do not inquire; but I base my request upon the alleged fact that he has been summarily dismissed from the service while a prisoner of war in the hands of the enemy, and thus no opportunity for a hearing in his own defense has been afforded to him, nor any chance for explanation. If he has been guilty of any military crime, no word of mine shall interfere between him and punishment; but in his behalf, under circumstances so hard and peculiar, as the Governor of his State and the signer of the commission of which the order for his dismissal deprives him, I most respectfully remonstrate against such order as it stands, and pray as a matter of justice the reconsideration of it, and its suspension until he may be exchanged and placed in a position where defense or ex-

planation may be possible. His character as a citizen and a gentleman at home is such as to render the belief almost impossible that his supposed error admits no proper defense." The extended war correspondence of Governor Andrew can hardly furnish a better illustration of the personal interest with which he followed and sustained the loyal sons of Massachusetts in the field.

Papers of like import, from persons high in public and private life, were also addressed to the President. Mr. Lincoln at length sent these papers to General Meade, evidently in the hope that the latter would relieve him of the necessity of acting in opposition to his expressed wishes. But General Meade was still inexorable, and asked as before that his order might be allowed to stand.

At length Hon. Alexander H. Rice called the attention of Secretary Stanton to the case. The latter suggested such obstacles in the way of exchange—which was asked in order that I might have an opportunity to defend myself—that Mr. Rice concluded to go directly to the President. From an account written out for me quite a number of years ago by Mr. Rice, I take the following: He went alone and found the President alone. When Mr. Rice made known his errand Mr. Lincoln said in kindness, but at the same time with some signs of weariness, that he was familiar with the case, and tho it was one of peculiar hardship he could not attend to individual cases. He had no doubt but that there were a great many cases of peculiar hardship in the Army of the Potomac, and he added: "It is all that I can do to hear cases in classes, and those belonging to each class must abide by the decision made for that class." Mr. Rice replied that he appreciated the President's position, but he thought if he would give his attention to this case he would find it so peculiar that it must stand alone, and that accordingly the President in hearing it would not depart from his rule. Mr. Lincoln leaned back in his chair, crossed his knees, and said: "Mr. Rice, go on."

Mr. Rice saw that he had the ear of the President. "Here is a man," he said, "who in the summer of 1862 was a student in a theological seminary. You called for three hundred thousand men. He left his books, enlisted as a private

soldier, has been promoted through the various grades to be a captain in his regiment, and now, without any fault of his own, as you will admit, he has been summarily dismissed the service while a prisoner in the hands of the enemy without any opportunity of making personal defense. Is it right to leave him in this position? Is this a fitting reward for more than two years of faithful service?"

"I wish you would go over to the War Department," said Mr. Lincoln, "and state this case to General Hitchcock just as you have stated it to me, and say to him that if he can effect an exchange of the officer I desire it shall be done."

Mr. Rice suggested a possible difficulty from the fact that the order of General Meade dismissed me from the service, and on this account, on the part of the Confederates, there might be an objection to the exchange. The President replied: "Say to General Hitchcock, in case he raises that point, that if he can take care of the exchange, I think I can take care of the rank."

Mr. Rice at once made his way to the War Department, saw General Hitchcock, and stated the case as the President requested. General Hitchcock said he was familiar with it, but raised the point which Mr. Rice had anticipated. Mr. Rice then delivered the President's message, and General Hitchcock replied, "If the President will restore this officer to his rank I can effect the exchange." Mr. Rice asked General Hitchcock to state this in a note to the President. He did so, and Mr. Rice returned to the White House. Here he met Colonel John Hay, one of the President's private secretaries. As he placed General Hitchcock's note in his hand, Colonel Hay said: "Burrage, was he at Brown a few years ago?" Mr. Rice replied that I was graduated at Brown in 1861. "I remember him," said Colonel Hay. "I will take this to the President at once." On his return from the President's office a few minutes later he informed Mr. Rice that the President had revoked General Meade's order and restored me to my rank. The official order announcing the revocation was issued at the War Department February 7th, 1865.

While in the Libby I learned from an item in a Richmond paper that I had been dismissed the service for violation of re-

peated orders. My surprise can well be imagined. But I was sure the wrong would be wiped out when the facts were understood. I did not believe that comrades whose fidelity I had long proved would silently allow me to suffer even the slightest injustice, much less dismissal from the service upon statements which they knew to be utterly without foundation. And my mind was still further relieved when, a few days later, in another Richmond paper, I learned that Roger A. Pryor, formerly a brigadier-general, but then attached to General Lee's headquarters without a commission, had been captured in retaliation for my capture and sent to Fort Lafayette in New York harbor.

After my capture, as I subsequently learned, General Curtin gave instructions that the first Confederate officer found approaching our lines for the purpose of exchanging newspapers should be captured in retaliation for my capture. For a while the enemy made no attempt to exchange at that point. About a fortnight after, however, a Confederate officer came out near where I was captured and waved a paper, indicating a desire to exchange. Captain H. O. Dudley, of the Eleventh New Hampshire, who on that day was in command of the picket line in our front, advanced to meet the Confederate, and, drawing his revolver, ordered him to move toward our lines, telling him at the same time that he might consider himself a prisoner in retaliation for my capture. The prisoner proved to be Roger A. Pryor. General Parke, in forwarding him to General Meade, wrote: "I have the honor to forward a prisoner of war, Roger A. Pryor, captured on our lines, in retaliation for the capture of Captain H. S. Burrage, Thirty-sixth Massachusetts, on the 1st inst." This was November 27th, 1864. General Meade disapproved this retaliating capture, but declined to accede to a request of General C. M. Wilcox, November 29th, for Pryor's release.

From some of General Pryor's friends I soon learned that they desired to effect his exchange; and I received a letter from Governor Smith, of Virginia, saying that Colonel Ould, the Confederate commissioner of exchange, would release me at any time for General Pryor on the ground that I was improperly seized in the first

place. Meanwhile I had been transferred with other prisoners from the Libby to the officers' prison at Danville, Va. The order of the President revoking General Meade's order was dated February 7th. February 15th Colonel Smith, the Confederate officer in charge of the Danville prison, received orders to send one thousand prisoners to Richmond for exchange. February 17th, with the other officers at Danville—between four and five hundred—I was on my way to the Confederate capital. On our arrival we were taken to the Libby, where we remained until February 22d. On that day, forever memorable to us, we left Richmond, and, re-entering our lines at Varina, came once more under the Stars and Stripes. At Annapolis I learned that the President had revoked General Meade's order. On my return to Massachusetts Governor Andrew offered me a major's commission in a new regiment, but I preferred to return to the Thirty-sixth. On rejoining my regiment I found that General Curtin's adjutant-general had been killed at Petersburg, and General Curtin, evidently wishing to repair any injustice that had been done to me by General Meade, offered me the position, and I remained on the brigade staff during the remainder of my service.

The Ninth Corps, not long after the surrender of Lee, was ordered to Washington. On our way to City Point, where we were to embark on transports, we were to pass through Petersburg. The brigade encamped the night before a few miles west of the city, and in the early morning, with a single orderly, I rode into Petersburg in advance of the troops in order to call on Mr. Venable, and in person thanked him for his kindness to me when I was a prisoner at General Hill's headquarters in the preceding autumn. I found him at home, and it was a gratification to me to do him a service which, tho slight, was heartily rendered, and, I think, as heartily appreciated. From Mr. Venable I learned the particulars of General Hill's death at Petersburg in the assault of our troops on the 2d of April. I also learned from him that General Pryor was at home—his residence then was in Petersburg—and, as he offered to introduce me, I accompanied him to General Pryor's home. General

Pryor received me most courteously, and gave me the facts concerning my capture. He also informed me that the person with whom I exchanged papers on the day of my capture was not an officer, but General Heth's cousin, and that the paper the courier received from me was carried to General Heth. He himself, he said, had a talk with General Lee in reference to my capture, and urged my return on the ground that our men would certainly retaliate.

I had at length learned who it was with whom I had exchanged papers on that to me eventful November 1st, 1864. General Hill, I am satisfied, was honest in his view of my capture. He regarded the report made by General Heth as trust-

worthy, and acted accordingly. It is possible that General Lee was as ignorant of the facts in the case as was General Hill, but my conversation with General Pryor left a different impression on my mind.

What were the reasons for General Meade's extraordinary course in this affair I am unable to say. Those that have been given are utterly unworthy of a great soldier. Well was it for me that I had faithful friends in and out of the army; that Alexander H. Rice was at that time a member of Congress from Massachusetts; that John A. Andrew was Governor of the commonwealth; and especially that one who loved justice as did Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States.

PORTLAND, ME.

The Cuban School Question.

By Albert Gardner Robinson.

THE Cuban school question bids fair to develop into a controversy.

Controversies of that nature are wholly sure to develop two facts: First, that neither party to it is entirely right, and second, that in the efforts of the parties to establish themselves many statements will be made which are distinctly misleading without being distinctly false.

Briefly stated, the facts, so far as they are ascertainable here, are somewhat as follows: On November 2d, 1899, Prof. Alexis E. Frye was appointed (by Civil Order No. 210) as Superintendent of Schools of Cuba. On December 6th, 1899, a general school law, drafted along lines suggested by Mr. Frye, was issued as Civil Order No. 226. Under the provisions of this law Mr. Frye proceeded with an extensive organization of schools throughout the island. In his operations he was supported by General Brooke, during the brief remaining time of his command, and by his successor, General Wood. This support is amply evidenced by the appropriation of large sums of money in the furtherance of Mr. Frye's plans. Mr. Frye is a man of large ideas and unlimited enthusiasm. But it is evident that he is more enthusiastic than practical, and that he ended in a belief

that a vast and successful school system could be constructed from very raw material within a very brief period.

He appears to have wanted an immediate provision for every possible pupil in the island. The development of his idea appeared to the authorities as somewhat too aerial and too greatly lacking in systematic organization. Work was going on throughout the island, but the authorities were unable to obtain satisfactory reports of real progress. Money was being spent in large amounts, but no adequate system was in operation by which it could be determined whether the sums were being effectively and economically expended. Mr. Frye's idea appeared to be the establishment of schools. The idea of the administration was that schools should be established, but it also felt that the process should be accompanied by a system which should secure economy and efficiency. Upon that work, with perhaps an underlying question as to which was the supreme authority in the matter, the Superintendent and the Governor-General seem to have split.

My inference from all that comes to me from both sides is that General Wood, in a manner which is somewhat characteristic, failed to act with sufficient frank-

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